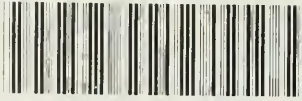
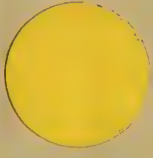


E 470
.2
C 45
~~1862~~

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 702 328 3



3
/ . ,

reported, chiefly intended for the Burnside expedition, but all under the command of General McClellan. During the months of October, November, and December, the weather was delightful and the roads fine. The question began to be asked in October, when will the advance take place? All had the most unbounded confidence in the army and its young general, and were anxiously waiting for a Napoleonic stroke. It came, but such a stroke! That a general movement was being prepared the whole country had known for weeks; but when the terrific blow was to be struck no one knew save the commander of the army of the Potomac. The nation believed in its young commander; the President relied upon him, and all, myself included, had the most unbounded confidence in the result of the intended movement. It came. On the 21st of October, McCall's division, twelve thousand strong, was ordered to Drainesville upon a reconnaissance. Smith's division, twelve thousand strong, was ordered to support him. McCall's reconnaissance extended four miles beyond Drainesville, and to within nine miles of Leesburg. Stone, on Sunday, was informed of McCall's and Smith's advance, and directed to make a slight demonstration upon Leesburg. How? He could do it in but one way, and that was by crossing the river and moving upon it.

According to the testimony of Colonel Lee, confirmed by Major Revere, of the twentieth Massachusetts, the following dispatch was sent from McClellan to Stone:

OCTOBER 20, 1861.

General McClellan desires me to inform you that General McCall occupied Drainsville yesterday, and is still there. Will send out heavy reconnaissances to-day in all directions from that point. The general desires that you keep a good lookout upon Leesburg, to see if this movement has the effect to drive them away. Perhaps a slight demonstration on your part would have the effect to move them.

A. V. COLLUM,
Assistant Adjutant General.

General McCall says:

"General McClellan told me, when he gave me the orders to march Saturday morning, that there were no confederate troops at Leesburg; that they had left there several days before. On my arrival at Drainsville, all the inhabitants told me that the brigade at Leesburg had crossed Goose creek, and returned to Manassas on Tuesday. That was a thing clearly understood. We did not see a man on the Leesburg road. I ascertained afterwards that Evans had sent back his heavy baggage with a guard, and that body crossing Goose creek gave rise to the report that he had retired with his whole force. But he was there at the time I was at Drainsville, but I did not know it. Had I been ordered forward, I have not the slightest doubt that I could

have defeated Evans, and captured his whole command. But it certainly would have been a very delicate matter, because they could have thrown up twenty or thirty thousand men from Centreville, and cut off my retreat from Drainsville."

In another place General McCall says:

"At six o'clock, Monday morning, I reported to him [General McClellan] that the engineers whom I had consulted reported to me that they would finish their work in two hours. I sent that, express, to General McClellan at six o'clock. I got his reply, dated eight o'clock, telling me to return as soon as the work was finished. I got his answer between nine and ten o'clock. I ordered the troops then to be ready to move, and as soon as the work was finished, I returned to my camp under orders."

Here are the orders given by General Stone on that occasion:

HEADQUARTERS, CAMP OF OBSERVATION,
POOLESVILLE, October 20, 1861, 10½ p. m.

[Special Orders, No. —.]

Colonel Devens will land opposite Harrison's Island with five companies of his regiment, and proceed to surprise the camp of the enemy discovered by Captain Philbrick in the direction of Leesburg. The landing and march will be effected with silence and rapidity.

Colonel Lee, twentieth Massachusetts volunteers, will, immediately after Colonel Devens's departure, occupy Harrison's Island with four companies of his regiment, and will cause the four-oared boat to be taken across the island to the point of departure of Colonel Devens.

One company will be thrown across to occupy the heights on the Virginia shore, after Colonel Devens's departure, to cover his return.

Two mountain howitzers will be taken silently up the tow-path, and carried to the opposite side of the island, under the orders of Colonel Lee.

Colonel Devens will attack the camp of the enemy at daybreak, and having routed them, will pursue them as far as he deems prudent, and will destroy the camp, if practicable, before returning.

He will make all the observations possible on the country; will, under all circumstances, keep his command well in hand, and not sacrifice them to any supposed advantage of a rapid pursuit.

Having accomplished this duty, Colonel Devens will return to his present position, unless he shall see one on the Virginia side nearer the river, which he can undoubtedly hold until reinforced, and one which can be successfully held against largely superior numbers. In such case, he will hold on and report.

CHARLES P. STONE,
Brigadier General.

Great care will be used by Colonel Devens to prevent any unnecessary injury of private property; and any officer or soldier straggling from the command for curiosity or plunder will be instantly shot.

CHARLES P. STONE, *Brigadier General.*

HEADQUARTERS CORPS OF OBSERVATION,
EDWARDS'S FERRY, October 21, 1861.

COLONEL: In case of heavy firing in front of Harrison's Island, you will advance the California regiment of your brigade, or retire the regiments under Colonels Lee and Devens, now on the Virginia side of the river, at your discretion, assuming command on arrival.

Very respectfully, colonel, yours, most kindly,
CHARLES P. STONE,
Brigadier Commanding.
Colonel E. D. BAKER, *Commanding Brigade.*

HEADQUARTERS CORPS OF OBSERVATION,
EDWARDS'S FERRY, October 21, 11.50.

COLONEL: I am informed that the force of the enemy is about four thousand, all told. If you can push them you may do so as far as to have a strong position near Leesburg, if you can keep them before you, avoiding their batteries. If they pass Leesburg and take the Gum Springs road, you will not follow far, but seize the first good position to cover that road. Their design is to draw us on, if they are obliged to retreat, as far as Goose creek, where they can be reinforced from Manassas. I have a strong position. Report frequently, so that when they are pushed Gorman can come in on their flank.

Yours respectfully and truly,
CHARLES P. STONE,
Brigadier General Commanding.
Colonel E. D. BAKER, *Commanding Brigade.*

Thus it is shown that Colonel Baker had reason to expect reinforcements, for the enemy were to be pushed upon their flank by General Gorman.

At two o'clock on Monday morning Colonel Devens crossed the river upon a reconnaissance with four hundred men at Ball's Bluff, opposite Harrison's Island, as directed by General Stone. At daylight Colonel Baker was ordered to cross to the support of Colonel Devens. I have read his orders. One scow and two small boats were their only means of transportation. At eight o'clock on Monday morning the fight commenced by Colonel Devens, and Colonel Baker was placed in command, as is alleged, with discretionary orders. Colonel Baker knew that Smith and McCall were at Drainesville, or within striking distance; that our troops were crossing at Edwards's Ferry, or, in other words, that forty thousand effective men were within twelve miles of him, and that at least thirty thousand were upon the Virginia side of the Potomac, and that in the nature of things he must be reinforced. He did not know that at half-past ten a. m., of Monday, or two hours and a half after Colonel Devens commenced the fight, the divisions of Smith and McCall commenced their retreat, by the express orders of General McClellan. He knew that Colonel Devens was contending with greatly superior forces, and, like a gallant soldier as he was, he hastened to his relief with all the force

he could take across with his inadequate means of transportation.

Colonel Baker has been charged with imprudence and rashness; but neither the facts nor the testimony support the charge. Instead of rashly or imprudently advancing into the enemy's lines, as was alleged, he did not move ten rods from the Bluff, and the only sustaining witness to this charge was one officer, who swore that he thought Colonel Baker imprudently exposed himself to the enemy's bullets. This kind of rashness is usually pardoned after the death of the perpetrator. At two o'clock, p. m., Colonel Baker found himself in command of about eighteen hundred men upon Ball's Bluff, including Devens's men and three guns, and the fighting commenced. The alternatives were fight and conquer, however, or be captured. That noble band of heroes and their gallant commander understood these terrible alternatives as well upon that bloody field as we do now, and nobly did they vindicate their manhood. During all those long hours, from two o'clock p. m. until the early dusk of evening, the gallant Baker continued the unequal contest, when he fell pierced by three bullets and instantly expired. A council of war was called, (after the frightful death-struggle over his lifeless remains and for them,) and it was decided that the only chance of an escape was by cutting through the enemy and reaching Edwards's Ferry, which was at once decided upon; but while forming for the desperate encounter, the enemy rushed upon our little band of heroes in overpowering numbers, and the rout was perfect.

Colonel Devens says:

"As we were talking, Colonel Cogswell came up, and it appeared in a moment that he was the officer entitled to take the command. Colonel Cogswell said to me, 'Colonel Devens, we should, I think, make an effort to cut our way to Edwards's Ferry; that is the thing to be done.' I replied to him as I had to Colonel Lee, that I would take any orders of his."

Colonel Lee says:

"Captain Harvey, of Colonel Baker's staff, his adjutant general, came up, and said that he believed that Colonel Cogswell was the senior officer. Colonel Cogswell was a stranger to me; I knew he was on the field; but whether he was my senior or I his, was a question I would not determine there. But, as Captain Harvey stated it confidently, I accepted it as a fact; for it was no time to dispute about rank on a field of battle like that. I said, 'Very well; what are your orders?' 'I think,' said Colonel Cogswell, 'that we better try to cut our way through the enemy to the left, and reach Edwards's Ferry,' which is from two and a half to three miles distant from where we were."

Major John Mix, third New York cavalry, says, in answer to the question:

"What number of men would have driven off the enemy at Ball's Bluff if you had gone up?"

"Answer. I think almost any number would, because we would have attacked them on their flank and rear. I think twenty-five men would have scared them off, for being in the woods, and coming right out upon them, they would have thought there was something terrific coming."

"Question. How many men had you over there (Edwards's Ferry) at the time you wanted to go up to Ball's Bluff?"

"Answer. I think not over fourteen hundred men."

General Stone says, (first testimony:)

"Now, here at Edwards's Ferry is Goose creek, (indicating on the map.) Here is an entrenchment of the enemy on the road to Leesburg, and there is another entrenchment in there, (indicating the places.) This is wooded ground along here, (above the ferry on the Virginia side.) When this fire commenced heavily on our right in the afternoon, these troops of the left would have gone up, as a matter of course, had it not been fully explained in the morning that that was an impossibility, there being two entrenchments of the enemy here armed with cannon. It was known beforehand that they were there." * * * *

"Question. They could not go directly up on account of these batteries?"

"Answer. No, sir; and that was known and explained to Colonel Baker before he started." * * * *

"Question. What was the strength of those batteries?"

"Answer. They were within the woods, and we could not tell what they were; they might be very weak or very strong. All I knew about them was, that they were in the woods, and that they had open spaces for the guns to play, and I knew there were three guns there."

Major Mix says, in answer to the question:

"Question. Were there any fortifications between the two places that would have obstructed you?"

"Answer. Yes, sir; there was an earthwork on a hill, some three and a half feet wall, which did not amount to much. If I had not met that regiment, it was my intention to gallop through that work."

"Question. Were there any guns in it?"

"Answer. I was informed by General Stone that there was not. He said the guns had been moved out a day or two before. I asked him if I could go through it, and he said I might if it was not held too strongly." * * *

"Question. Would it have impeded your going up there? Did he (General Stone) think it would?"

"Answer. No, sir; I do not think it did."

"Question. He thought there were a thousand men with three guns in the way?"

"Answer. I only heard that statement about

the regiment and three guns about three or four weeks ago."

This testimony was taken February 14, 1862. Stone's first testimony was taken January 5, 1862.

"In a conversation with General Stone, I was regretting that we had not moved up, and he said we could not have got there for that reason."

"Question. Did you know at the time of any obstruction to your going up there?"

"Answer. No, sir."

Major Dimmick testifies:

"Question. When did you go up to this breastwork?"

"Answer. I went up there Wednesday morning a little before day, just at break of day. I think there were men inside; we could see figures moving, but we could not tell whether they were armed or not. The day before, during the skirmish, men were seen there throwing up earth. It was, evidently, very hastily constructed, nothing but a very simple earthwork running across the road, perhaps forty paces long."

"Question. Would you have considered that at that time any impediment to the march of infantry?"

"Answer. Not at all; hardly more than if you should turn this table upon its side, and put some men behind it. The boys were so anxious to go that they would hardly wait for the order to go."

Colonel Tompkins testifies:

"Question. Were there any obstacles in the way of your going up to Ball's Bluff?"

"Answer. None at all. No doubt we would have had to fight a little on our way up. But I think by going up that way, on that side, we would have drawn their attention towards us, and engaged them so that Colonel Baker's forces would have had an opportunity to have got a better foothold than they had. He had a horribly bad place to cross there." * * * *

"Question. Did you see any batteries, or anything of that kind, that would have prevented your going up to Ball's Bluff?"

"Answer. No, sir; I did not. We did not receive any fire from any batteries."

Philip Haynes testifies:

"Question. Are you acquainted with the ground on the Virginia side between Edwards's Ferry and Ball's Bluff?"

"Answer. Certainly, I think I ought to be. I have been up and down there a great many times."

"Question. Is there any difficulty in the way of men passing from Edwards's Ferry to Ball's Bluff on the Virginia side?"

"Answer. I should think not."

"Question. Are there any fortifications there that you know of?"

"Answer. It was reported that there was a little embankment there, but the men would not require to go within a half mile of that to go to Ball's Bluff.

"Question. Were there any guns mounted there?

"Answer. I never heard of any." * * *

"Question. There was no obstacle to infantry marching right up?

"Answer. None at all, except right on the bluff by the river. The land is rolling there as it is about Chain Bridge; but after you get from the river about an eighth of a mile it is perfectly accessible for infantry."

General Stone says, (second examination:)

"Question. They have no guns to cannonade with except west of Leesburg?

"Answer. None at all that are in position, nor have they had any at any time. According to the last information which I obtained, they had three field guns that moved from point to point; those field guns they move about."

How many were killed in battle, how many drowned in the relentless river, will never be correctly known; suffice it to say our little force were destroyed. Why was this little band permitted to be destroyed by a force little more than double its numbers in presence of forty thousand splendid troops? Why were McCall and Smith ordered back at the very moment that Baker was ordered to cross? If we wanted Leesburg, McCall could have taken it without the loss of a man, as his movement in mass had already caused its evacuation, and the enemy did not return in force until after McCall had retreated. If we did not wish to capture Leesburg, why did we cross at all? Of what use is a slight demonstration, even without results? These are questions which the people will ask, and no man can satisfactorily answer. Why were not reinforcements sent from Edwards's Ferry to Colonel Baker? The distance was only three miles and a half. We had fifteen hundred men across at two o'clock on Monday, and the universal concurrent testimony of officers and men is that a reinforcement of even one thousand men—some say five hundred, and one gallant captain swears that with one hundred men he could have struck them upon the flank, and changed the result of the day. Why, I say, were not these reinforcements sent? Stone swears, as I have already shown, that there were batteries between Edwards's Ferry and Ball's Bluff which would have utterly destroyed any force he could have sent to Baker's relief, and that Baker knew it. But Stone was not sustained by a single witness; on the contrary, all swear that there were not, to their knowledge, and that they did not believe there were any, and a civilian living upon the spot, and in the habit of passing over the ground frequently, swears there were none. And again, Stone, when questioned as

to the erection of forts under the range of his guns, upon his second examination, swears positively that there is not a gun now between Edwards's Ferry and Ball's Bluff, and never has been. Why, then, were not reinforcements sent from Edwards's Ferry? Let the men who executed and planned this horrible slaughter answer to God and an outraged country. General Banks swears that his orders were such from General McClellan, that upon his arrival at Edwards's Ferry, although his judgment was against crossing, he did not feel himself at liberty to decline crossing, and he remained upon the Virginia side until Thursday.

General Banks swears:

"Question. One question in relation to the crossing. You said that General Gorman thought it not advisable for our forces to cross. General Lander thought it was, and you felt constrained to adopt General Lander's view. Do you mean that you felt constrained in consequence of instructions or orders?

"Answer. I concurred with General Lander on account of my instructions. But then it was not an affair that I should have planned myself at that time.

"Question. You took your instructions from General McClellan?

"Answer. My instructions from General McClellan were to cross the river, and I did so as far as was practicable. The difficulty was that we had no transportation to make it safe."

So much for the wholesale murder at Ball's Bluff.

[Five o'clock having arrived, the Senate took a recess until seven, p. m.]

Mr. CHANDLER. After the melancholy disaster at Ball's Bluff, our army of the Potomac, of over one hundred and fifty thousand men, retired at all points except directly in front of Washington, where it remained stationary for many months. The last of October the Navy Department applied to the military for four thousand men to hold Matthias Point after the enemy should have been shelled from it by the gunboats, and thus break open the navigation of the Potomac, a military as well as national necessity.

Assistant Secretary Fox testifies:

"Question. Do you know of an attempt having been made, or a project formed, to take possession of Matthias Point at any time? If so, will you state the particulars?

"Answer. The Navy Department, as early as in June last, (1861,) proposed to the War Department to take possession of that point, and an examination was made by the War Department with reference to the project, by Captain Woodbury, of the engineers, and Captain Palmer, of the topographical engineers. The War Department, or General Scott, declined to send a force down there as early as June. Captain

Ward sent up a very urgent request, just before he was killed, asking for only three hundred men to occupy that point, and General Scott consented to allow three hundred men to go; but General Mansfield thought that there ought to be as many as five thousand, and it fell through probably on that account, though General Mansfield was very earnest and very positive in his opinion that that point ought to be occupied in force.

Mr. Welles went over to see General Scott about it, I think in June, and pressed it upon him personally as well as by letter. The first official letter that I find upon our books was written on the 1st day of July. It is as follows, addressed to Mr. Cameron:

“NAVY DEPARTMENT, *July 1, 1861.*

“SIR: I have the honor to inform you that this Department is entirely satisfied, from reports of its officers, that the Potomac river will soon be closed by the batteries of the rebels, unless one or more important points are occupied by the Federal troops.”

“Then Bull Run intervened between that and the next one which I find upon our books, which is dated August 20, 1861, to Mr. Cameron from Mr. Welles. It is as follows:

“NAVY DEPARTMENT, *August 20, 1861.*

“SIR: The importance of keeping open the navigation of the Potomac is so obvious that no argument is necessary upon the subject. So far as is possible this Department has, and will continue to discharge its duty in this matter by an armed flotilla. But there are one or two points where shore batteries can be made to intercept communication, and in view of that danger and recent investigations, I would most urgently request that immediate measures be taken by the War Department to fortify and intrench Matthias Point. A single regiment, aided by two of our steamers, could heretofore, and perhaps may still, take possession and secure it. But if more than a regiment is required, it appears to me indispensable that the requisite number should be furnished.

“Attention, on repeated occasions, has been called to the particular necessity of holding that place as absolutely essential to the unrestricted navigation of the Potomac. The navy will at any moment contribute its efforts towards seizing and holding that place, and I apprehend there need not be any delay. Cannot a sufficient force be sent down forthwith to seize, and in connection with such armed vessels as we can order, hold Matthias Point, and thus keep open the navigation of the Potomac?

“I understand that troops will be sent to the lower Maryland counties to keep the peace and prevent batteries from being erected on the left bank. This is a timely and wise precaution. But it is equally necessary that we should take possession of Matthias Point. Should the insurgents get possession of that point it would require a very large force to dispossess them.”

“On the 31st of August I find the following

letter from the Navy Department to the War Department:

“AUGUST 31, 1861.

“SIR: I have the honor to enclose copies of dispatches received from Captain Craven, in command of the Potomac flotilla, and beg leave to call your attention to his suggestions of the necessity of prompt and efficient measures for keeping open the navigation of the Potomac. I have heretofore, on repeated occasions, called the attention of the War Department to this subject, which is of immense importance to this city, and the operations of the army as well as of the navy. It appears to me there should be no delay in taking the precautionary steps recommended by Captain Craven; and this Department, with the naval force in the Potomac, is ready at all times to aid in this measure.”

“Nothing, however, was done at that time. In October there were in the Potomac the Pawnee, the Pocahontas, and the Seminole, three very heavily armed vessels, and the R. B. Forbes, with two very formidable guns on board. These vessels were detailed to go with Dupont’s expedition to Port Royal; but before they went the Navy Department proposed to the President and to the War Department that the rebel batteries that had then begun to appear upon the river should be destroyed, and their places occupied by the army. It was urged that these were the heaviest ships that we had in the river, and that we must withdraw them for this southern expedition, as ships were too scarce to allow them to remain here in the river doing nothing. And an effort was made to get the army to cooperate with us, or, rather, to permit us to cooperate with the army.

“They agreed to send down four thousand men to take possession just above Matthias Point. This was some time in October. I do not find any written communication upon our books in regard to it; but I can get the exact date, if necessary. The orders were sent down from the Navy Department to Captain Craven and Captain Dahlgren, and scows and steamers were provided for carrying the troops and landing them at Matthias Point. Captain Craven collected at Matthias Point all the boats of his flotilla, and we notified him that four thousand men would arrive there in the middle of the night. Those troops did not go. The first intimation we had of that was a tug-boat sent up the next day, from Captain Craven, with word that the troops had not come.

“I went over to see the President about it, and we went over to see General McClellan. He told us that the engineers were of the opinion that troops could not be landed in such large numbers, and they had concluded not to send them. I told him that the business of landing the troops belonged to the navy, and that we had the means provided for it, and that nobody had inquired of us whether we could land them or not. It was then concluded that they should go the next night, and we sent down word to Captain Craven to be prepared the next night,

'but the next night they did not go. They never went; and we never knew what the reason was.

"We then sent our boats out of the river. We told the President, who was exceedingly earnest upon the subject, that the election had been made that the river should be closed; that we had done our part, and that we had nothing further to do; that we had the vessels and could destroy the batteries, but the vessels would be of no use here if that was not done, and it would be of no use to destroy the batteries if they were not occupied by our troops. We told him that these vessels, as he very well knew, must go down to Port Royal. They were of very light draft, very powerful, and their machinery was covered. They accordingly went out, one after another." * * *

"I have heard a great many reasons assigned for this course, as I have gathered them from conversations. General McClellan thought it would bring on a general engagement to attempt to move there. The engineers were under the impression that the proper way to carry those batteries was to march down the river. The President assisted the Navy Department as far as he could in urging this plan upon General McClellan. And he manifested more feeling and more disappointment than I have seen him before exhibit, when he found the men had not gone.

"Question. General McClellan objected to furnishing the men?

"Answer. General Scott commenced.

"Question. But afterwards General McClellan objected?

"Answer. Yes, sir; it was continued by him."

Mr. WRIGHT. I desire to ask the Senator from Michigan a question.

Mr. CHANDLER. Certainly.

Mr. WRIGHT. The Senator seems to be presenting testimony taken before the committee on the conduct of the war.

Mr. CHANDLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. WRIGHT. I desire to know whether it is presented at the instance of the committee?

Mr. CHANDLER. Yes, sir; by a vote of the committee.

Mr. WRIGHT. I am a member of the committee, and I was not aware of it.

Mr. CHANDLER. After consultation, it was agreed by General McClellan that four regiments should be furnished, and the time was fixed for their embarkation. At the appointed time the vessels were ready, steam up and transports alongside, and thus they remained all night, but no troops appeared. Upon inquiry as to the cause, the General-in-Chief informed the Secretary of the Navy that he did not send the troops because he feared the arrangements for landing were not perfected. The Secretary of the Navy informed him that when the navy and army co-operated, it was the duty of the navy to provide boats for land-

ing, and that ample provision had been made; whereupon, that night was fixed upon as the time to embark the troops. Again the boats were in readiness, steam up, and the gallant sailors and marines eager for the fray, but again were they disappointed. The troops did not arrive; whereupon the Navy Department informed the War Department that it considered the refusal to furnish troops a virtual abandonment of the Potomac to the rebel blockade; that the vessels were required for the southern expedition, and would at once be sent to their destination; and thus for months was the nation disgraced by the blockade of its capital, and many millions of dollars wasted in expensive transportation, which a small force judiciously posted might have prevented. Mr. Fox, in answer to the question whether this small force would be safe on Matthias Point, replied, "Certainly; our vessels can shell the Point upon both sides for a long distance." Why was this disgrace so long submitted to? No man knows or attempts to explain. Month after month one of the most splendid armies the world had ever seen, of two hundred thousand men, permitted itself and the national capital to be besieged by a force never exceeding one-half its own number.

During the month of December, the nation became impatient. The time had arrived and passed when we were promised a forward movement. The roads were good, the weather splendid, the army in high condition, and eager for the fray. How long the roads and weather would permit the movement, no man could predict; still there was no movement. The generals, with great unanimity, declared that the army had reached its maximum of proficiency as volunteers, but still there was no movement. Under these circumstances, the committee on the conduct of the war asked an interview with the President and Cabinet, and urged that the winter should not be permitted to pass without action, as it would lead to an incalculable loss of life and treasure by forcing our brave troops into a summer campaign, in a hot and to them inhospitable climate. The President and Cabinet were united in the desire that an immediate advance should be made, but it was not made, although we were assured by General McClellan that it would be very soon; that he had no intention of going into winter quarters, and he did not. While the enemy erected comfortable huts at Centreville and Manassas for their winter quarters, our brave and eager troops spent the most uncomfortable winter ever known in this climate, under canvas, as thousands and tens of thousands of invalid soldiers throughout the length and breadth of the land will attest. Why did not the army move in all December, or why did it not go into winter quarters? No man knows, nor is any reason assigned.

On the 1st day of January, 1862, and for months previous to that date, the armies of the

Republic were occupying a purely defensive position upon the whole line from Missouri to the Atlantic, until on or about the 27th of January the President and Secretary of War issued the order *forward*. Then the brave Foote took the initiative, soliciting two thousand men from Halleck to hold Fort Henry after he had captured it with his gunboats. They were promptly furnished, and Henry fell; then Donelson, with its fifteen thousand prisoners; then Newbern; and the country was electrified. Credit was given where credit was due. Do-nothing strategy gave way to an immediate advance upon the enemy's works, and the days of spades and pickaxes seemed to be ended. On the 22d of February a forward movement upon our whole line was ordered, but did not take place. The army of the Potomac was not ready; but on the 10th of March it moved, against the protest of the commanding general and eight out of twelve of the commanders of divisions; but the President was inexorable, and the movement must be made. It proceeded to Centreville, and there found deserted huts, wooden artillery, and intrenchments which could and can be successfully charged by cavalry. It proceeded to Manassas, and found no fortifications worthy of the name, a deserted, abandoned camp, and dead horses for trophies. The enemy, less than forty thousand men, had leisurely escaped, carrying away all his artillery, baggage, army, and stores. Our army of the Potomac, on that 10th day of March, showed by its muster-roll a force of two hundred and thirty thousand men. Comment is needless. The grand army of the Potomac proceeded towards Gordonsville, found no enemy, repaired the railroad, and then marched back again.

Why this grand army of the Potomac did not march upon Richmond has never been satisfactorily explained, and probably never will be. One reason assigned was lack of transportation; but there were two railroads, one by way of Acquia Creek and Fredericksburg, the other via Manassas and Gordonsville, which could have been repaired at the rate of ten miles per day, and our army was ample to guard it. Had this overwhelming force proceeded directly to Richmond by these lines, it would have spent the 1st day of May in Richmond, and ere this the rebellion would have been ended. This grand army, *ably* commanded, was superior to any army the world has seen for five hundred years. Napoleon I never fought one hundred and thirty thousand men upon one battle field. Yet this noble army was divided and virtually sacrificed by some one. Who is the culprit?

Before the advance upon Manassas, General McClellan changed his plans, and demanded to be permitted to leave the enemy intrenched at Centreville and Manassas, to leave the Potomac blockaded, and to take his army to Annapolis by land, and there embark them for the rear of the enemy to surprise him. In the

council of war called upon this proposition, the commanding general and eight out of twelve of the commanders of divisions (and here permit me to say that I am informed that seven of the eight generals were appointed upon the recommendation of General McClellan) voted that it was not safe to advance upon the wooden guns of Centreville, and to adopt the new plan of campaign. The President and the Secretary of War overruled this pusillanimous decision, and compelled McClellan to "move immediately upon the enemy's works." He marched, and the trophies of that memorable campaign are known to the Senate and the country.

At Fairfax, General McClellan changed his plan and decided not to advance upon the rebels with his whole force, but to return to Alexandria, divide his army, and embark for Fortress Monroe and Yorktown. It was decided that forty-five thousand men should be left for the defence of the capital, and he was permitted to embark. After much delay (unavoidable in the movement of so vast a force, with its enormous material) the general-in-chief himself embarked. Soon after he sailed it came to the knowledge of the committee on the conduct of the war that the capital, with its vast accumulation of material of war, had been left by General McClellan virtually without defence, and the enemy's whole force, large or small, was untouched in front. The committee immediately summoned General Wadsworth, the commanding general and military governor of the District, who, upon oath, made part of his testimony the following statement to the Secretary of War:

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON,
WASHINGTON, D. C., April 2, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following condensed statement of the forces under my command for the defences of Washington:

Infantry	15,335
Artillery	4,294
Cavalry (six companies not mounted)	848
	<hr/> 20,477

Deduct sick and in arrest and confinement	1,455
-------------------------------------------------	-------

Total present for duty	<hr/> 19,022
------------------------------	--------------

I have no mounted light artillery under my command. Several companies of the reserve artillery of the Potomac are still here, but not under my command or fit for service.

Of this force I am ordered by General McClellan to detail two regiments (good ones) to join Richardson's division (Sumner's corps) as it passes through Alexandria; one regiment to replace the thirty-seventh New York volunteers in Heintzelman's old division, and one regiment to relieve a regiment of Hooker's division at Budd's Ferry; total, four regiments.

I am further ordered this morning by telegraph

to send four thousand men to relieve General Sumner at Manassas and Warrenton, that he may embark forthwith.

In regard to the character and efficiency of the troops under my command, I have to state that nearly all the force is new and imperfectly disciplined; that several of the regiments are in a very disorganized condition from various causes which it is not necessary to state here. Several regiments having been relieved from brigades which have gone into the field, in consequence of their unfitness for service, the best regiments remaining have been selected to take their place.

Two heavy artillery regiments and one infantry regiment, which had been drilled for some months in artillery service, have been withdrawn from the forts on the south side of the Potomac, and I have only been able to fill their place with very new infantry regiments, entirely unacquainted with the duties of that arm, and of little or no value in their present position.

I am not informed as to the position which Major General Banks is directed to take, but at this time he is, as I understand, on the other side of the Bull Run mountains, leaving my command to cover the front from Manassas Gap (about twenty miles beyond Manassas) to Acquia Creek.

I deem it my duty to state that, looking at the numerical strength and character of the force under my command, it is, in my judgment, entirely inadequate to, and unfit for, the important duty to which it is assigned. I regard it very improbable that the enemy will assail us at this point; but this belief is based upon the hope that they may be promptly engaged elsewhere, and may not learn the number and character of the force left here.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

JAMES S. WADSWORTH,

Brigadier General and Military Governor.

Hon. SECRETARY OF WAR.

I will here state that no man has a higher regard for General Wadsworth than myself. I know him well, and esteem him highly; but I must be permitted to say that his soldierly simplicity exceeds belief. His only hope of impunity from attack is that the enemy will not know his force, and will speedily be engaged elsewhere. By whom and where? Not certainly by the army under General McClellan, for he had already learned that McClellan never attacked. By whom and where? I again ask. General Wadsworth must answer. One hundred and twenty thousand men were landed at Fortress Monroe, and sat down before Yorktown under General McClellan, while the enemy at that time did not reach ten thousand men. Instantly General McClellan began to telegraph for reinforcements, and continued to telegraph up to the day he was attacked by the rebels. The country has been deceived as to McClellan's force, and has been led to believe it was inadequate. John Tucker, Assistant Secretary of War, procured transportation and superin-

tended the shipment of all the troops and reinforcements. He testified as follows:

"Question. What is your position under the Government?

"Answer. I am Assistant Secretary of War.

"Question. Do you know anything about the transportation of troops to Yorktown and the peninsula?

"Answer. I do. I attended to the embarkation of those troops.

"Question. Of the whole of them?

"Answer. Yes, sir.

"Question. Can you state what number of troops were first embarked for that place?

"Answer. Prior to the fifth of April, as I know from the statements made to me by the quartermasters who were attending to the details, there were one hundred and twenty-one thousand five hundred men.

"Question. That was before General Franklin's division was ordered there?

"Answer. Yes, sir. Shortly after that Franklin's division was shipped; it numbered twelve thousand men. About the first of June McCall's division was sent down there; it consisted of ten thousand men. And about the same time, from Baltimore and Fort Monroe there were sent eleven thousand men; and the last of June a part of Shields's division were shipped. I did not superintend that, but I am informed there were about five thousand of them.

"Question. You superintended the shipment of all the troops but those from General Shields's division?

"Answer. Yes, sir.

"Question. Does that comprise all that has been sent to General McClellan since he landed there?

"Answer. That is all that I know of.

"Question. That includes the number sent by Generals Wool and Dix?

"Answer. Yes, sir. That makes one hundred and fifty thousand men in all.

"Question. Do you know of any other forces at the disposal of the Government that could have been spared for his assistance?

"Answer. I do not.

"Question. Were there reasons why General McDowell's forces could not be sent?

"Answer. Yes, sir. The President deemed them essential for the protection of Washington.

"Question. And that force was none too strong for the defence of this place?

"Answer. It was so regarded.

"Question. Have you any personal knowledge of the state of the roads and the condition of the country on the peninsula when General McClellan first took his army there?

"Answer. Early in April I visited the headquarters of General McClellan, and found the roads totally impassable for the transportation of artillery, and almost so for supplies. On my arrival at General McClellan's headquarters, I was informed that he was sending his cavalry back to the river, because it was impossible for

'him to transport forage to sustain them. As 'an evidence of the condition of the roads from 'Ship Point to his headquarters, I was myself 'eight hours going seven miles on horseback."

This testimony is so important that I have deemed it absolutely requisite that the country should have it. The country has been deceived. It has been led to believe that the Secretary of War or somebody else has interfered with General McClellan's plans, when he had an army that could have crushed any other army on the face of the earth. One hundred and fifty-eight thousand of the best troops that ever stood on God's footstool were sent down to the peninsula and placed under the command of General McClellan; and yet the whole treasonable press of the country has been howling after the Secretary of War because of his alleged refusal to send reinforcements to General McClellan. As I said the other day, he has sent every man, every sabre, every bayonet, every horse, that could be spared from any source whatever, to increase that grand army under General McClellan in front of Richmond. Why did he not enter Richmond? We shall see. General McDowell's force was not sent down because it was deemed necessary to protect the capital and its vast accumulation of military stores. Although the President and Secretary of War would have been justified in holding the whole of that force, General Franklin's division was taken from it and shipped to the peninsula at General McClellan's most urgent solicitation, and it was his urgent cry for reinforcements that brought Shields down to unite with McDowell; and thus united, those two columns were to march upon Richmond and still further reinforce and aid General McClellan. As to the manner in which General McClellan has been treated by the War Department, I will present the testimony of the Quartermaster General. General M. C. Meigs testifies as follows, among other things:

"*Question.* Will you give, if you have no objection, an approximate estimate of the number of troops sent to General McClellan before the late battles near Richmond?

"*Answer.* In doing so, I shall have also to give the grounds for my opinion. I was called upon to provide transportation for about one hundred and ten thousand men, with their artillery, horses, baggage, provisions, &c. I am informed by Mr. Tucker, Assistant Secretary of War, who negotiated the most of the charters of vessels at the first starting, that he made up an estimate just after they sailed, by which it appeared that about one hundred and twenty-three thousand men, I think; two hundred and seventeen thousand horses; eighteen hundred wagons; and forty-four batteries of artillery, had been shipped for the peninsula. I do not understand that Franklin's division was included in that enumeration. Since then, Franklin's division, which must have been ten or twelve thousand

strong, and McCall's division, nearly eleven thousand strong, have been sent down there. Certain troops have been obtained from Fortress Monroe and Norfolk, being drilled troops, and replaced by newer ones from here, Baltimore, and elsewhere. The number of those I could hardly guess at. I should suppose they were about eight or ten thousand men; and about eleven thousand men since these late battles have been sent from Alexandria; they were a part of Shields's division, and some regiments that were taken from here. I have estimated roughly that that would make a total of about one hundred and sixty thousand men, from first to last, transported to the peninsula. We have sent more wagons since—a considerable number; and General Van Vliet, who was here the other day, and was chief quartermaster of the peninsula, told me that there were about three thousand wagons now in camp at Harrison's Point. We have sent horses down, from time to time, to replace those that died or were broken down and killed.

"*Question.* Have you had the means of knowing whether the Government has had it in its power to send more reinforcements to General McClellan than it has since his landing on the peninsula?

"*Answer.* I do not think the Government could have safely sent, from any troops within its reach here, any considerable reinforcements to General McClellan beyond what it has already sent. A few hundred men, more or less, would amount to nothing. The only way, it appears to me, in which the Government could have done so, was to have called for more troops, raised them, organized them, drilled them, and made them fit to go there; for raw troops are of no use."

* * * * *

"*Question.* Will you state to the committee if, in your estimation, everything required by General McClellan of the Government has been promptly sent to him?

"*Answer.* I think so. I know the Government has desired to do it. In my own department, we have endeavored to supply everything called for; and I have no doubt that has been done in all the other departments."

I present this testimony now partly because we have not yet had an answer to the resolution of the Senate asking for information as to the number of men shipped to the peninsula. It is not for me, sir, to state the strength of McClellan's army at this time; but I know it is one hundred and fifty-eight thousand men, less the number lost by sickness and casualties. Does any man doubt that this army, ably handled, was sufficiently strong to have captured Richmond and crushed the rebel army? I think not, if promptly led against the enemy. But instead of that, it sat down in malarious swamps, and awaited the drafting, arming, drilling, and making soldiers of an army to fight it, and in the mean time our own army was rapidly wasting away. Unwholesome water,

inadequate food, over work, and sleeping in marshes, were rapidly filling the hospitals, and overloading the return boats with the sick. Sir, we have lost more men by the spade than the bullet—five to one since the army started from Yorktown under McClellan. Had the soldiers been relieved from digging and menial labor by the substitution of negro laborers, the army of the Potomac would to-day, in my estimation, contain thirty thousand more brave and efficient soldiers than it does. Had it been relieved from guarding the property of rebels in arms, many valuable lives would have been saved. Yorktown was evacuated after a sacrifice of more men by sickness than the enemy had in their works when our army landed at Fortress Monroe. The battle of Williamsburg was fought by a small fraction of our army, and the enemy routed. During the battle, General McClellan wrote the following dispatch, miles from the field of battle:

(Received at War Department, at 12.22 p. m., May 6.)

BIVOUAC IN FRONT OF WILLIAMSBURG,
May 5, 10 p. m.

HON. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*:

After arranging for the movements up the York river, I was urgently sent for here. I find Joe Johnson in front of me in strong force, probably greater a good deal than my own. Hancock has taken two redoubts and repulsed Early's brigade by a real charge with the bayonet, taking one colonel and a hundred and fifty prisoners, killing at least two colonels and many privates. His conduct was brilliant in the extreme. I do not know our exact loss, but fear Hooker has lost considerably on our left. I learn from prisoners that they intend disputing every step to Richmond. I shall run the risk of at least holding them in check here, while I resume the original plan.

My entire force is undoubtedly considerably inferior to that of the rebels, who will fight well; but I will do all I can with the force at my disposal.

G. B. McCLELLAN,
Major General Commanding.

He would try to "hold them in check!" He could not hold them. He could not stop his eager troops from chasing them. After a small fraction of his army had whipped their entire force and been chasing them for hours, he penned that dispatch and sent it to the Secretary of War; and, if I remember aright, it was read in one of the two Houses of Congress. As you may suppose from that dispatch, there was no great eagerness in following up that victory. Three Michigan regiments were not only decimated, they were divided in twain, in that bloody battle at Williamsburg. They fought there all day without reinforcements. One Michigan regiment went into the trenches and left sixty-three dead rebels, killed by the bayonet, weltering in their blood. But who has ever heard,

from any official communication of the head of the army, that a Michigan regiment was in the fight at Williamsburg? I do not blame him for giving credit where credit is due, for I do not believe he knew anything more of that fight than you or I.

When that battle was fought and won, all the enemy's works were cleared away, and we had an open road to Richmond. There was not a single fortification between Richmond and Williamsburg. All we had to do was to get through those infernal swamps, march up, and take possession of Richmond; What did we do? We found the worst swamp there was between Richmond and Williamsburg, and sat right down in the centre of it and went to digging. We sacrificed thousands and tens of thousands of the bravest troops that ever stood on the face of God's earth, digging in front of no intrenchments, and before a whipped army of the enemy. We waited for them to recruit; we waited for them to get another army. They had a *levy en masse*. They were taking all the men and boys between the ages of fifteen and fifty-five, and magnanimously we waited weeks and weeks and weeks for them to bring these forced levies into some sort of consistency as an army. The battle of Fair Oaks was fought. There the enemy found again a little fraction of an army, very much less than half, and they brought out their entire force. I have it from the best authority that they had not a solitary regiment in or about Richmond that was fit to be put in front of an enemy that they did not bring to Fair Oaks and hurl upon our decimated army. Again the indomitable bravery of our troops, (of the men, of the private soldiers, the indomitable energy of Michigan men and New Jersey men—but I will not particularize, for all the troops fought like lions,) and the fighting capacity of our army, not only saved it from being utterly destroyed by an overwhelming force, but gave us a triumphant victory. The enemy went back to Richmond pell mell. I have been informed by a man who was there at the time, that two brigades of fresh troops could have chased the whole Confederate army through the city of Richmond and into the James river, so utter was their rout and confusion.

And what did we do then? We found another big swamp, and we sat down in the centre of it, and went to digging. We began to throw up intrenchments when there were no intrenchments in our front, no enemy that was not utterly broken. We never took advantage of the battle of Fair Oaks. Again Michigan soldiers were cut to pieces by hundreds. Go into the Judiciary square hospital in this city, and you will find more than half the occupants are Michigan men who were shot at Fair Oaks and Williamsburg, men who stood until a regiment of a thousand men was reduced to one hundred and five, and even then did not run. Sir, these men have been sacrificed, uselessly sac-

rificed. They have been put to hard digging, and hard fare, and hard sleeping, and if there was any hard fighting to do they have been put to that; and, besides all this, at night they have had to guard the property of rebels in arms. They have been so sacrificed that two or three of the Michigan regiments to-day cannot bring into the field two hundred and fifty men each out of a thousand with which they started.

Fair Oaks was lost; that is to say, we won a brilliant victory, but it did us no good. We did not take advantage of it. Of course it would have been very unfair to take advantage of a routed army; [laughter.] It would not have been according to our "strategy." We magnanimously stopped, and commenced digging. There was no army in our front; there were no entrenchments in our front; but we did not know what else to do, and so we began to dig and ditch, and we kept digging and ditching until the rebels had impressed and drilled and armed and made soldiers of their entire population. But that was not enough; they sent Jackson up on his raid to Winchester, and we waited for him to come back with his twenty or thirty thousand men. We heard that Corinth was being evacuated, and of course it would have been very unfair to commence an attack until they brought their troops from Corinth; and so we waited for the army at Corinth to get to Richmond. After the rebels had got all the troops they ever hoped to raise from any source, we did not attack them, but they attacked us, as we had reason to suppose they would. They attacked our right wing, and, as I am informed upon what I must deem reliable authority, they hurled the majority of their entire force upon our right wing of thirty thousand men, and during the whole of that Thursday our right wing of thirty thousand men held their ground, and repulsed that vast horde of the enemy over and over again, and held their ground at night. Of course you will say a reinforcement of twenty or thirty thousand men was sent to these brave troops that they might not only hold their ground the next day, but send this dastardly army into Richmond a second time, as at Fair Oaks. No, sir; nothing of the sort was done.

At night, instead of sending them reinforcements, they were ordered to retreat. That was "strategy." The moment they commenced their retreat, as is said in the dispatches, the enemy fought like demons. Of course they would. Who ever heard of a retreating army that was not pursued by the victors like demons, except in the case of rebel retreats? No other nation but ours was ever guilty of stopping immediately after a victory. Other armies fight like demons after a victory, and annihilate an enemy, but we do not. Our left wing and centre remained intact. A feint was made upon the left and centre, and I have here, not the sworn testimony, but the statement of one

of the bravest men in the whole army of the Potomac—I will not give his name, but a more highly honorable man lives not—that when his regiment was ordered under arms, he had no doubt that he was going to march into Richmond. He believed the whole force of the enemy had attacked our right wing; he believed there was nothing but a screen of pickets in front; and he thought that now our great triumph was to come off. His men sprang into line with avidity, prepared to rush into Richmond and take it at the point of the bayonet. He never discovered his error until he saw half a million dollars' worth of property burned right in front of his regiment, and then he began to think that an advance upon Richmond was not intended. And it was not. We had been at work there and had lost ten thousand men in digging intrenchments; we had spent months in bringing up siege guns, and we abandoned those intrenchments without firing one gun. Our army was ordered to advance on the gunboats instead of on Richmond. This colonel told me that his regiment fought three days and whipped the enemy each day, and retreated each night. The left wing and centre were untouched until they were ordered to retreat. No portion of our vast force had been fought except the right wing under Porter, and they whipped the enemy the first day.

This is called strategy! Again, sir, I ask why was this great army of the Potomac of two hundred and thirty thousand men divided? Human ingenuity could not have devised any other way to defeat that army; divine wisdom could scarcely have devised any other way to defeat it than that which was adopted. There is no army in Europe to-day that could meet the army of the Potomac when it was two hundred and thirty thousand strong, the best fighting material ever put into an army on the face of the earth. Why was that grand army divided? I simply charge that grave and serious errors have been committed, and, as I have said, no other way could have been devised to defeat that army. If the one hundred and fifty-eight thousand men that were sent to General McClellan had been marched upon the enemy, they could have whipped all the armies the confederates have, and all they are likely to have for six months. One hundred and fifty-eight thousand are about as many as can be fought in any one battle-field. One hundred and fifty-eight thousand men are a vast army, a great deal larger army than that with which Napoleon destroyed six hundred thousand of the Austrians in a single year. One hundred and fifty-eight thousand men, ably handled, can defeat any force the confederates can raise, and that is the force that went down to the peninsula. But, sir, it was divided; and then it lay in ditches, digging, drinking rotten water, and eating bad food, and sleeping in the mud, until

it became greatly reduced in numbers, and of those that were left very many were injured in health. Still they fight; still they conquered in every fight; and still they retreated, because they were ordered to retreat.

Sir, I have deemed it my duty to present this statement of facts to the Senate and the country. I know that I am to be denounced for so doing, and I tell you who will denounce me. There are two classes of men who are sure to denounce me, and no one else, and they are traitors and fools. The traitors have been denouncing every man who did not sing pæans

to "strategy," when it led to defeat every time. The traitors North are worse than the traitors South; and sometimes I think we have as many of them in the aggregate. They are meaner men; they are men who will come behind you and cut your throat in the dark. I have great respect for southern traitors who shoulder their muskets and come out and take the chances of the bullet and the halter; but I have the most superlative contempt for the northern traitors, who, under the pretended guise of patriotism, are stabbing their country in the dark.

1. /
(

Permalife•
pH 8.5